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College of Education alumnus receives national recognition for administration role

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Georgia Southern University College of Education alumnus Jeff Kelly, Ed.D. ('96), who earned a bachelor's in middle grades education from the University, was named a 2018 National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Outstanding Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year.

Recognizing the significant role assistant principals play in the overall academic achievement of students, the NAESP recognition program honors one assistant principal (pre-K-8) from each state annually and highlights his or her efforts for student achievement and educational excellence. Kelly was recognized for his efforts as assistant principal at Upson-Lee Middle School (ULMS) in Thomaston, Georgia, where he administered and assisted in the creation of the school's Response to Intervention (RTI)

program, which is now used as a model district-wide.

"The foundation of this program is building positive relationships with our students," Kelly said. "It's about focusing on an individual student and with the student's help, developing strategies to help the student."

The RTI program focuses on the development of the "whole child and not one specific area," he explained.

Kelly served as a math, science and Georgia history teacher at ULMS before transitioning to become an instructional coach and later an assistant principal at East Coweta Middle School. He returned to ULMS in 2015. Recently, Kelly accepted a position as the director of federal program and assessment for the Thomaston-Upson School District.

"Every day is a different, challenging day, and that is what I enjoy the most about administration," Kelly said. "The family environment within a small, rural school is what I love."

Kelly explained that he chose to enter the administrative side of his educational career to build relationships with students, teachers, staff, parents and outside stakeholders. Becoming an assistant principal allowed him to do what he wanted the most — to be able to help the school community even more.

"I have worked under excellent principals who provided me with growth opportunities," said Kelly. "I had teachers, instructional coaches and special education staff who gave me open and honest feedback that pushed me to become a better leader. NAESP is a great organization that is full of resources at your fingertips. I am glad to be a member of such a great group of leaders and humbled to be selected for this award in honor of my school district, employees and students."

Kelly is also grateful to be an Eagle Educator.

"As I reflected back on the powerful impact my former teachers instilled in me, I knew at that very moment, I wanted to impact the lives of children," Kelly said. "I chose Georgia Southern for my teaching degree because of its solid teacher-training reputation. The University has a small town feel while offering a quality educational teaching program. When I tell people I went to Georgia Southern University, there is a sense of respect for my educational past."

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving more than 27,000 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

Proposal submissions open for the National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action and Change

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CROSS-CULTURAL

**COUNSELING AND EDUCATION CONFERENCE
FOR RESEARCH, ACTION, AND CHANGE**

The call for proposals is open for the 18th annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action and Change. The conference will be held at the Georgia Tech Savannah Campus, Feb. 8-9 in Savannah.

The priority deadline for proposal submission is Oct. 19.

Proposals may be submitted for any of the six conference strands: Ethical Issues in Professional Counseling; Social Change, Leadership and Advocacy; Practice, Strategies, Techniques and Interventions; Research and Theory; Teaching, Training and Supervision; and Identity Formation.

This conference gives professionals the opportunity to hear from experts on racial identity development, ethnic identity development, and gender and sexual orientation, from infancy through adult maturity. These topics will be used to promote an interdisciplinary understanding of identity development. By doing so, the conference embraces an anti-oppressive and multicultural perspective and invites participants to examine the effects of identity on group dynamics in the United States.

The conference is hosted by the Georgia Southern University College of Education and the Division of Continuing Education. For more information on the conference and how to register, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/conted/nccec.

For more information from the Division of Continuing Education, please contact Bonnie Overstreet at crosscultural@georgiasouthern.edu or 912-478-MORE.